



Rowan County Human Resources Department of Administration

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Dear Fellow County Employees:

Welcome to County Government! You are a member of a dedicated team of men and women striving to provide many services to the citizens of our community.

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with the vital information regarding your job, personnel policies, and benefits. It was designed to briefly answer questions you may have about your employment with the County. However, if your questions are not answered here, please contact your supervisor or Human Resources.

I will be working along with you to build a more efficient and progressive government to better serve the citizens of our County. I hope you enjoy your employment with Rowan County.

Sincerely,

*Tim Russell
County Manager*

INTRODUCTION

Your job has been given its title according to the responsibilities you have been given and the duties you perform. Trained analysts established required knowledge, skills, and abilities for each job classification.

Jobs with similar duties and responsibilities go into the same class and draw rates of pay within the same salary range. Your supervisor, the Department Director, and Human Resources are responsible for studying, and redefining your job, if necessary.

However, each position has its own unique duties and responsibilities. Your supervisor will explain the requirements of your job, and also help you develop a work plan. Periodically, you will meet together to discuss your work as it progresses. Your supervisor is familiar with policies, rules, benefits, and services which apply to you as a County employee. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about employment with the County.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Work Schedule

The standard work week for local government is 40 hours. Some agencies use a variable work schedule. This allows you to choose the time you begin to work from 7:30a.m. to 9:00a.m. The normal workday includes one hour for lunch. Therefore, the end of your workday will depend on your arrival time. Your choice of working hours and any change you wish to make later must be approved by your supervisor and the Department Director. Due to work requirements, not all positions use the total variable work schedule. Your supervisor will give you specific information about your department's operating schedule and your workday. If you are in a department with 24-hour operations, your work schedule will be set for your particular work unit.

Payday

The County pays bi-weekly (every other Friday). If you are absent from work on payday, make arrangements with your supervisor about your check. If you lose a paycheck, tell your supervisor immediately.

Deductions

The County is required to deduct from your paycheck:

- Federal and State withholding taxes
- Local Government Retirement contributions
- Social Security taxes
- Absences from work not covered by authorized leave credits
- Tax Liens
- Child Support Orders
- Bankruptcy Orders

Other deductions may also be made from your check; however, they must be requested and authorized in writing by you. Among these are:

- Insurance premiums
- United Way Contributions
- Credit Union deposits
- YMCA/Gold's Gym/Rowan Health & Fitness membership dues
- 401-K contributions

Personal Protective Equipment

The County furnishes, at no cost to you, most of the personal protective equipment required by the North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). Your supervisor will discuss with you items of protective equipment which you must furnish at your expense.

Your Personnel File

You may examine all of your own personnel file except for (1) pre-employment letters of reference and (2) information concerning a medical disability, mental or physical, that a prudent doctor would not give to a patient.

If you object to any material in your file on the grounds that it is inaccurate or misleading, you may add your own statement to your file. If you wish to have any statement removed from your file, you should follow the County's grievance procedure.

Pay Plan

County jobs that are similar in kind and level of work are grouped together and given the same title. Based on what outside employers are paying for similar work and on what other County employees are paid, each class of positions is then assigned to one of these salary grades.

Hiring Rate And Probationary Period

Normally, as a new employee, you are paid at the hiring rate and you remain there during a probationary period of six months. The probationary period is a part of the hiring process. It is an "on-the-job trial" or test period. In this way, supervisors observe new employees in their work, help them learn their new duties, and determine if they are suited for the particular job. Your supervisor will look at your progress often during this period. When you demonstrate that your work progress has been satisfactory and the decision is made to continue your employment, you will be given regular status. Your salary then moves up two steps in the salary grade from the rate you were hired. Employees who are in a work against status do not receive an increase when completing their probationary period. During the probationary period you earn all benefits of a regular employee (Except 401-K and health insurance). Health insurance becomes effective on the first day of the month following the ninetieth day of employment.

Commission Increases

The County Commissioners consider general salary raises for County employees. These are in addition to those provided for in the County Personnel System salary plan. When you receive an across-the-board increase your salary is raised, but your pay grade and step remain the same.

Overtime Pay

County employees receive straight-time pay for a standard 40-hour work week. If you are required to work more than 40 hours in any week, and you are eligible for overtime, you will receive time and one-half off (comp

time) for time worked over 40 hours during a week. In unusual circumstances, overtime pay equal to one and one half times your regular hourly rate will be considered.

Overtime pay does not apply to employees whose jobs are deemed exempt as executive, administrative or professional. Other special provisions apply to certain types of work such as emergency services, in-residence employment, seasonal employment, and law enforcement work.

Promotion

You may apply for higher level jobs for which you are qualified. Human Resources will post vacancies to be filled internally in a location known to employees. County employees are given first chance to apply for the majority of vacancies. If you want to be considered for an opening, submit an application to Human Resources before the listed closing date.

When you are promoted, your salary will be raised 5% or to the minimum of the new position. You may receive more under certain conditions.

Change In Job Classification

If because of a change in your duties and responsibilities, your job is assigned to a different class with a higher salary range, your salary will be changed to at least the minimum of the new range. If you are already at that rate, your pay rate may be left unchanged or you may be given an increase based on management's review of your salary in relation to others.

Salary Range Revisions

Salary studies are made from time to time to ensure that the County's salary range for each class is competitive in the labor market. The County Commissioners may approve a higher salary grade for a class based on these studies. If this affects your position, your salary must be raised at least to the minimum of the new range.

When your salary is already above the new minimum, your salary may remain unchanged or be increased, depending on your salary as compared to others in the same classification and availability of funds.

Demotion

You may be demoted or transferred to a lower class at your request; for unsatisfactory work; or during a reduction in force.

Reporting and Remaining At Work

Your job is important. If you will be late or absent due to sickness or for any reason, you must notify your supervisor immediately.

If an employee is absent for three consecutive days without notification, the employee will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned his/her position because they are unavailable for continued employment.

Public Relations and You

As a County employee, you represent Rowan County Government to everyone you meet. The impression you give and the statements you make can influence what people think of County government. You are our best public relations agent. Therefore, you should conduct yourself in a manner above reproach at all times.

Most information in County government is public. However, many confidential matters are entrusted to County employees. If you are unsure about what you are requested to release, you should ask your supervisor.

Dress Code

Due to the nature of our business and the frequency of professional business people utilizing our office, Rowan County expects employees to maintain a clean, neat, professional, and well-groomed appearance at all times. Employees should dress appropriately for the job and the work environment.

Use of County Property

County property must be used carefully and properly. Remember, your taxes help pay for all the equipment you use, whether it be pencils or a County car. Improper use is grounds for disciplinary action.

Smoking Policy

Smoking and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited in County buildings and County vehicles.

Travel

If you are required to use your personal car to conduct County business, you will be reimbursed on a per mile basis. When you are required to travel out of town, you will receive reimbursement for meals and lodging (Reference Accounting Procedures Manual).

Political Activity

County employees are free to inform themselves and vote as they wish on political issues.

The law states that an employee may not:

1. Take an active part in managing a campaign, or campaign for a political office while on duty or within any period of time when expected to perform services for which he (or she) receives compensation from the County.
2. Otherwise, use the authority of his (or her) position, or utilize County funds, supplies or vehicles to secure support for or oppose any candidate, party or issue in a partisan election involving candidates for office or party nominations, or affect the results thereof.
3. Promise rewards, threaten loss of job or coerce any County employee to support or contribute to a political issue, candidate or party.

Violation of this law is grounds for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal in cases of deliberate or repeated violation.

Outside Employment

You must get your Department Director's approval before beginning a second job. This will be reviewed periodically and approval may be withdrawn at any time. Outside work that would result in a conflict of

interest or interfere with your primary job with the County cannot be approved.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Rowan County is an equal opportunity employer. State and Federal laws require that employment decisions are to be made without consideration of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability except where sex, age or absence of disability is a bona fide occupational qualification.

Each employee has a right to be considered equally in personnel functions, including, but not limited to: pay, training, promotion, demotion, layoff, and termination.

Sexual Harassment

Employees are guaranteed the right to work free from sexual harassment. Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of continued employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such employee; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

All employees play a role in preventing or eliminating sexual harassment by: 1) examining his/her behavior on the job; 2) talking about the issue of sexual harassment; 4) identifying and taking individual action to stop inappropriate behavior by communicating directly and immediately with the person(s) whose behavior is offensive, and 5) bringing the matter to the attention of your supervisor, higher level manager, Department Director, or the Human Resources staff if the employee feels sexually harassed.

Grievance

In County Government, a good relationship between management and employees is based on mutual trust and respect. If you have any problem concerning your working conditions, discuss it first with your supervisor. In most cases a simple misunderstanding can be cleared up

immediately. The lower the step on which a problem or grievance is settled, the easier and better it is for both the employee and management.

Once you have completed your probationary period and are considered a regular employee, you have the right to present your problem or grievance in accordance with the procedure prescribed free from interference, coercion, restraint, discrimination or reprisal.

You shall be allowed such time off from your regular duties as may be necessary and reasonable for the processing of a grievance without loss of pay, vacation, or other time credits.

Notice of Resignation

If you decide to leave County service, applicants must be recruited for your job. Please give a written notice of resignation two weeks before your last day of work.

BENEFITS

Vacation (Annual Leave)

Full time and part-time benefited employees accrue vacation on a bi-weekly basis determined by the number of hours the employee works in the pay period and by the length of County service as follows:

YEARS OF SERVICE	(Based on 2080 hrs) Average Days Per Annum	Factor Per Hour Worked
(A) less than 2	10	.0385
(B) 2 but less than 5	12	.0462
(C) 5 but less than 10	15	.0577
(D) 10 but less than 15	18	.0692
(E) 15 or more	21	.0808

Notation: Hours calculated in above chart are rounded. The computer is programmed to accommodate any rounding errors in its computation.

Vacation leave is intended for a meaningful break in your work. Using all of your leave a day or less at a time may be permissible but does not accomplish the true purpose of vacation.

Emergency Medical Services accrue vacation as follows:

YEARS OF SERVICE	Days Per Annum	Hours Per Pay Period
(H) less than 2	14	4.42 hours
(I) 2 but less than 5	17	5.31 hours
(J) 5 but less than 10	21	6.64 hours
(K) 10 but less than 15	26	7.97 hours
(L) 15 or more	30	9.29 hours

Notation: Days calculated in above chart are rounded.

With the approval of your supervisor, annual leave may be used for personal reasons requiring absence from work. The minimum amount that can be taken is one-quarter hour units.

The County wants you to use your vacation leave. However, the time must be approved by your supervisor.

You may carry 240 hours of accumulated annual leave from December 31st to January 1st of the next year. Annual leave in excess of 240 hours will be transferred to your sick leave balance. Employees who leave the County's employment will be paid for accumulated vacation days. At the employee's request, Rowan County will transfer accumulated vacation to another government agency, in lieu of payment, providing the other agency will accept the time. If an employee dies, a lump sum payment for accumulated vacation leave is made to the estate.

Eight hours of vacation shall be credited to the accumulated benefits of the employee who does not use sick leave and who is not absent without pay for a period of 6 consecutive months. Benefited part-time employees earn vacation hours on a pro-rata basis determined by the number of hours worked.

Holidays

County employees generally observe the following holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving (2 days)
Christmas (2 or 3 days)

When a holiday is on Saturday, Friday will be taken as the normal holiday. When a holiday is on Sunday, the following Monday will be taken as the normal holiday. Because of the variety of County services, all employees do not observe holidays on the same day. If your work requires a change from the holiday schedule above, your supervisor will tell you.

Holiday Premium Pay

County employees receive at least nine paid holidays each year. If you are required to work on a scheduled holiday, you will receive additional pay equal to one-half of your regular wage. You will also receive time off on another day (maximum of 8 hours).

Sick Leave

Full-time and part-time (who work 1,000 hours or more) employees accrue .0462 hours for every hour worked. This is an average of 8 hours of sick leave per month for full-time employees. EMS employees working a fluctuating workweek earn 10.62 hours per month. There is no maximum accumulation of sick leave. Your sick leave is like a good insurance policy--it is there when you need it, and the more you save, the more valuable it becomes.

Sick leave may be requested for:

Personal illness.

Death in the immediate family. (The family is defined as spouse, parents, brother, sister, children, grandparents, grandchildren. The step, half, and in-law relationships are included as appropriate based on this listing.)

Illness of a member of the employee's immediate family. (The family is defined as spouse, parents, children, mother-in-law, and father-

in-law, including step relationships. If other dependents are living in the employee's household, sick leave may also be taken.)

Actual period of disability connected with childbearing.

Medical appointments.

Your Department Director may ask you to submit a doctor's certificate to verify sick leave. When you retire, your accumulated sick leave days are changed into retirement credits. Twenty sick leave days or a portion thereof equal one month's service. Rowan County will transfer accumulated sick leave to another government agency, providing the other agency will accept the time.

Family Medical Leave

Employees who have been employed by Rowan County for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours in the last year for Rowan County are eligible for up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave during the calendar year for any of the following reasons:

1. Birth or adoption of a child by employee.
2. Serious health condition of the employee which prevents performance of duties.
3. Serious health condition of employee's spouse, child or parent for which the employee is needed for their care.

Contact Human Resources for specifics about this leave.

Parental Leave

During periods of pregnancy and child birth, the employee usually desires to be on leave before and after the period of actual disability. Leave without pay shall be granted for the actual period of temporary disability not covered by sick or vacation leave. Additional leave without pay may be granted before and after the period of disability, normally not to exceed a total of six months. Such leave without pay must be requested in writing and approved by the Department Director.

The County will reinstate the employee to the same position or one of similar seniority, status, and pay upon return to work.

Other related provisions:

1. When using sick leave for the period of disability, a doctor must furnish the dates of the actual period of disability.
2. The employee will continue to be credited with sick leave and vacation leave during any period of paid leave.

Natural parents or adoptive parents of a child under five years of age may request leave without pay under this policy. Leave without pay for the parents of an adopted child can begin no earlier than one week prior to the date the parents receive the child.

Military Leave

Reservists in the Armed Forces are entitled to leave with pay, not to exceed 80 hours in each calendar year, when ordered to federal or state duty. You must notify your supervisor, in writing, as far in advance as possible of scheduled call-ups or training. A copy of your military orders must accompany your notification to your supervisor or be provided as soon as you receive them. Rowan County's military duty policy is in accordance with The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) and subsequent revisions to that law.

Civil Leave

You will be given leave with pay to serve jury duty. This will not be charged against leave time. You will be entitled to any juror's pay received, plus your regular County salary for the period.

If you attend court:

As part of your job, no leave is required. However, any court fees you receive must be turned into the County.

Due to subpoena as a witness, (except as a plaintiff or defendant) you may be given leave with pay. Any fees received may be retained by you.

School Visitation

Employees are given the opportunity to visit each of their children and/or grandchildren in school (pre-school to 12th grade) during the school year. Four hours of leave per year (July – June) will be granted. The leave shall be at a mutually agreed upon time between the Department Director and the employee. If possible, the employee should submit a written request at least 48 hours prior to the time of leave.

Wellness Program

Wellness is important in the performance of job functions and enhances quality of life. The County adopted a Wellness Program to promote a healthy lifestyle to include not using tobacco products, eating nutritiously, and participating in moderate physical activity. A Wellness Committee comprised of County employees, coordinate County activities to promote wellness.

Employees are encouraged to have a physical examination on a yearly basis. In order to promote a yearly physical, each employee receives two hours of leave for a wellness exam. This type of leave is independent of vacation or sick leave and is accrued on a calendar year basis.

Leave Without Pay

If approved by the Director of Administration, leave without pay, normally not over twelve months, may be granted for reasons such as education or disability. If disability leave is required, all sick leave and vacation must be used before going on leave without pay. County-paid health insurance ceases during leave without pay, except for approved FMLA purposes. However, employees have the option to continue their health insurance by paying the premium. You must apply in writing to your supervisor, and are obligated to return to duty at the end of this leave. Sick leave or annual leave is not earned during leave without pay. If you need further information about this policy, please contact Human Resources.

Local Government Retirement

The County provides benefits for you and your family in case of disability, retirement, or death after you have completed certain service

requirements. The benefits are available in addition to Social Security. You contribute 6 cents of each dollar you earn and no income tax is paid on this until you retire. The County adds almost an equal amount towards your Retirement benefits.

After five years, you have a "vested interest". This means that, if you leave County service, you may leave your contributions in the system and draw a retirement income beginning at age 60. At age 65, or after 30 years in the retirement system (at any age), an employee can retire with full benefits.

An employee can retire with reduced benefits after age 50 if he or she has 20 or more years in the system. Law Enforcement Officers can retire with full benefits at age 55 with five or more years of service and with reduced benefits at age 50 with 15 years of service.

If you cease to be a County employee (except by death or retirement), you may withdraw all your retirement contributions. You will receive interest if you have at least five years in the retirement system. You may receive your contributions 60 days after you receive your final paycheck. Withdrawal may be subjected to Federal and State withholding tax. If you return later to County service, you may buy back this time toward retirement after five years of full time service.

Retirement Death Benefit

After one year of employment, members of the Local Government Employees Retirement System automatically are eligible for a death benefit. It is free, but cannot be transferred if you should leave County service. The beneficiary is paid an amount equal to the employee's salary earned in the year before death up to a limited amount set by the Retirement System. This is paid in a lump sum.

401-k Plan

After you have successfully completed a probationary period, you may participate in the County sponsored Supplemental Retirement Income Plan. The County contributes a percentage of your salary to the plan and you have the option to contribute an additional amount to this plan through a pre-tax deduction. You have a choice of several investment options, each option being an insured investment or a mutual fund. For more information, contact Human Resources.

Hospital and Medical Benefits

You may elect to enroll in the County's health plan. There is a three month waiting period for coverage to begin and a twelve month waiting period for pre-existing health conditions.

If you wish coverage for dependents under the Rowan County health care plan, an additional payment can be deducted from your paycheck. You pay a month in advance for coverage.

Supplemental Insurance

Group cancer, accident, and disability insurance is offered to County employees through payroll deduction. These plans are underwritten by private companies, which are responsible for contacting employees, explaining the different plans and coverages available. You may continue coverage through an individual policy if you leave employment with the County. Though you pay the full cost, group rates are usually lower than those of an individual policy.

Life Insurance

The County provides employees with a life insurance policy. The amount of life insurance will be payable to the beneficiary named by the employee. Employees may purchase coverage for their dependents.

Dental Insurance

Dental insurance is available for you and your family through payroll deduction. For details contact Human Resources.

Pre-tax Premium Plan and Flex Plan

Your medical, dental, and supplemental insurance payments are deducted from your paycheck before state and federal taxes are computed. The result is less taxes taken out of your paycheck and more take home pay.

This same pre-tax benefit is offered in the form of flexible spending accounts. The Reimbursement Accounts were established to allow you to pay for out-of-pocket medical and/or dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis. These out-of-pocket expenses may be on you or your eligible dependents and include expenses not reimbursed by an insurance plan. As a new employee you may enroll during your first pay

period. Subsequent enrollment must be at the beginning of the calendar year.

Because of the tax savings you enjoy through the Pre-Tax Plan, the Internal Revenue Service prohibits you from changing your election during the plan year unless you have a change in your family situation. You may make a change which is consistent with any of the following: marriage, divorce, or death of a spouse; birth, adoption, or death of a child; a change in your spouse's employment status; a change from part-time to full-time employment (or vice versa) by you or your spouse; or taking an unpaid leave of absence by you or your spouse. A request to change an election must be made within 30 days from the date of the family status change.

Worker's Compensation

County employees are fully covered under the Worker's Compensation laws. These laws provide payment for lost time and medical attention at County expense, if you suffer a job-related injury or illness.

It is your responsibility to claim compensation. Report an accident or occupational disease immediately to your supervisor. A claim will be filed with the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

You may take all sick and vacation leave or any portion of each and receive medical benefits due under the Worker's Compensation Act. Any unused sick or vacation leave may be kept for future use.

Unemployment Compensation

County employees are covered by unemployment compensation. The local office of the Employment Security Commission will determine an employee's eligibility to receive these benefits if separated from County service.

Social Security

County employees contribute a set percentage of their salary to the Federal Social Security program. This amount is matched by the County. Payments cannot be withdrawn.

Local Government Employees' Credit Union

As an employee with Rowan County, you are eligible to join the Local Government Credit Union. The Credit Union is a cooperative, member owned financial institution that is operated by and for the benefit of Local Government Employees and their families.

Deposits made in the Credit Union are insured up to \$100,000 by the NCUA (National Credit Union Administration), a federal agency. The Credit Union offers a wide variety of financial services to meet your needs. There are branches and Automatic Teller Machines located throughout North Carolina.

Services include:

Statement Savings	Direct Deposit
Share Drafts	Wire Transfers
Money Market Savings	Home Mortgage Loans
Loan Services	Travelers Checks
Free Notary Services	Certificates of Deposit
VISA Card	Automated Teller Machine
Payroll Deduction	Individual Retirement Accounts

Service Awards

To reward employees for their years of service, awards are given to eligible employees on an annual basis. Service awards are given for five years of service and in increments of five years thereafter.

Employee Assistance Program

The EAP is a professional, confidential counseling service available to help employees and their family members resolve personal issues and problems before they affect health, family relationships, or job performance. Employees can talk to an EAP counselor about marital issues, financial issues, child or elder issues, problems with co-workers, balancing work and family responsibilities, alcohol or drug abuse, or dealing with the every day stresses in their life. Sessions with EAP counselors are a free service provided by the County. Sometimes, additional counseling or treatment may be required. The EAP counselor can help determine if extended services are needed or whether a referral is necessary.

Legal Defense

County employees may be provided legal defense for any civil or criminal action against them which is caused by an act or omission made while performing their duties. The County Commissioners determine whether the County will provide the defense.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The County has a formal policy on disciplinary action and dismissal which departments are required to use when an employee's unsatisfactory performance or unacceptable conduct makes it necessary. This may include an oral warning, written warning, and final written warning. Employees can be suspended without pay or demoted as disciplinary measures.

Dismissal For Grossly Inefficient Job Performance

An employee can be dismissed for Grossly Inefficient Job Performance which occurs in instances in which the employee fails to satisfactorily perform job requirements as specified in the job description.

Personal Conduct

Employees who exhibit unacceptable conduct may be dismissed immediately, without any prior warnings.

DISCLAIMER

This handbook is not intended to be relied on by an employee in deciding what benefits, policies, or services are available or applicable to them. If it appears that a benefit, policy, or service may be relevant, the specific rules and regulations of the County should be checked.

This booklet provides the employee a brief synopsis of benefits covered by Rowan County. The specific ordinances and procedures are set by the County Commissioners and departments who determine the actual implementation of all such policies, benefits, and services. The County reserves the right to modify or discontinue these policies at any time.



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